

Employee Absenteeism in the Digital Age

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Abstract

How do mobile devices in the workplace influence whether employees show up for work or not? Since both a positive and a negative effect from mobile devices on employee absenteeism seem possible from a theoretical point of view, I would like to contribute to a better understanding of this interrelationship with an empirical analysis. Based on large-scale employer-employee panel data sets that are highly representative of German economy, I find a positive overall effect of mobile devices on employee absenteeism. Consequently, employees who are increasingly surrounded by mobile devices at their workplaces are also more likely to be absent due to illness. In my identification strategy, I primarily apply a bracketing property combined with a selection-on-observables approach which provide consistent, highly significant and robust results. Furthermore, I find suggestive evidence for three main drivers of the overall effect: lack of skills of certain employee groups, lack of expediency of mobile devices for certain jobs/activities, and work environments characterized by stress.

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